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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/789,659	02/27/2004	Pieter G. Wybro	144599/MOD012	9153

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ANDREWS & KURTH, L.L.P.
 600 TRAVIS, SUITE 4200
 HOUSTON, TX 77002

EXAMINER

SPAHN, GAY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3673

DATE MAILED: 06/17/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/789,659

Applicant(s)

WYBRO ET AL.

Examiner

Gay Ann Spahn

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 February 2004 and 16 February 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-44 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions - Restriction Requirement

Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-11 and claims 12-27, drawn to a method of mooring a floating hydrocarbon vessel and a method of installing an offshore floating vessel, respectively, classified in class 114, subclass 294.
- II. Claims 28-41, drawn to an arrangement for installing an offshore floating vessel, classified in class 405, subclass 223.1.
- III. Claims 42-44, drawn to a method of tendon installation, classified in class 405, subclass 224.

Inventions I and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the arrangement for installing an offshore floating vessel as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process, such as one that does not require the step of tensioning said pull-down members from said tensioning devices to further submerge said vessel.

Inventions I and III are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2)

that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because the method of mooring a floating hydrocarbon vessel and the method of installing an offshore floating vessel do not require the tendon installation steps of: suspending an upper end of said tendon from a floating hydrocarbon drilling or production vessel; or positioning said tendon above a foundation anchored in seabed; or lowering a lower end of said tendon into said foundation; or securing said lower end of said tendon to said foundation. The subcombination has separate utility such as installing a vessel without any necessary tension.

Inventions III and II are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case, the claimed arrangement can be used to practice another and materially different process such as one that does not require the tendon installation steps of: suspending an upper end of said tendon from a floating hydrocarbon drilling or production vessel; or positioning said tendon above a foundation anchored in seabed; or lowering a lower end of said tendon into said foundation; or securing said lower end of said tendon to said foundation. As an example, the claimed arrangement does not need a foundation.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Election/Restrictions - Election of Species Requirement

This application contains claims directed to four (4) different groups of species of the claimed invention from which Applicants must elect. The four (4) different groups of species from which Applicants must elect are as follows:

(1) Species (of Tension Leg Platforms (TLP's)): Figs. 1-7; Figs. 8-9; and Figs. 10-13.

(2) Species (of tensioning devices): winch (Fig. 3; claims 15 and 38); strand jack (Fig. 12; claims 16 and 39); stopper (Fig. 9; claims 19 and 36); and gripper (Fig. 9; claims 19 and 37).

(3) Species (of pull-down tension member): chain (Figs. 1-8; claim 35); and line (Figs. 9-13; claim 34).

(4) Species (of controlling the tensioning device 44): locally (claims 22 and 32); and remotely (claims 23 and 33).

Applicants are required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species from **each** of the four groups for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, independent claims 1, 12, 28, and 42 appear to be generic.

Applicants are advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species from each of the four groups that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, Applicants will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, Applicants must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should Applicants traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, Applicants should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gay Ann Spahn whose telephone number is (571)-272-7731. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 7:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Heather C. Shackelford can be reached on (571)-272-7049. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

^{GAS}
Gay Ann Spahn, Patent Examiner
June 7, 2005



HEATHER SHACKELFORD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600